

amount of most recent personnel action, and agency and location to which currently assigned.

Employees do not have to obtain prior approval before speaking with a member of the media about public information. However, notification following a conversation or interview with the news media should be made the same day of the contact. Notification of media contact should be made to the designated public information officer in the county or agency. If a county does not have a public information officer, or the county's public information officer cannot be reached, notification should be made to AOC's public information office. Because of the immediacy of the situation, notification by phone is encouraged. Written notification is not required.

CHAPTER SIX: COMMUNICATION PLANS

Before you begin, think about the message you want the public to hear about your area of expertise, then develop a media plan.

- What is your goal?
- What do you want the media to tell the public about your courthouse, office, section or program?
- Who is your audience?
- What media are you going to use to reach your audience?
- What resources are available to you?

Once you've answered those questions, you can begin putting together a plan. Communication plans should include a calendar that lays out what you want to accomplish in a particular month, week or even day.

Communication plans may include press releases, fact sheets, news conferences, web sites, public service announcements, media events,

interviews, columns and editorial boards. All are part of a good media plan. If you have a budget, then you can also include paid advertising.

News Releases

A news release provides information about an issue in a standardized format. News releases must be concise, generally no longer than one double-spaced page. The purpose of a news release is to announce an issue of importance to your organization.

News releases should answer the 5 W's in the very first paragraph:

- **Who?** Who will make/is making the announcement?
- **What?** What does the media need to know?
- **Where?** If you're announcing an event or a news conference include where will it take place. Include clear directions and parking information.
- **When?** When will/did the event/announcement take place?
- **Why?** Why is this event important? A release should give a reporter a compelling reason to cover your event or announcement.



News releases are a good way to communicate, but you should never rely on a news release as your only communication tool. If you are announcing an event or a press conference, you should always make a follow-up call to make sure the media received the release.

Fact Sheets

Fact sheets lay out the main points of your program. They should be concise and easy-to-read. Fact sheets may include the following information:

- What your program does
- Who it affects
- Real-life examples of people who have benefited from the program